



TALES OF YANKEE ENCHANTMENT.

STORY OF THE BOY WHO NEEDED WINDING

And His Mother Neglected to Wind Him Up.

(Copyright by the Author, Charles B. Loomis.)

You boys who are wound up to run through a whole lifetime and whose machinery so seldom gets out of order—that is, if you are out of doors a good deal and don't spend your time reading.

There was quite a crowd of Winchester people at the library, for the local paper had contained a notice of the coming race, and as it was Saturday, nobody in town had anything to do. That is, nobody who counts for anything. I believe some of the grown-ups did have some work to attend to, but, after all, what are grown-ups? Only children who have outlived their usefulness. You see, the keyhole being in the back of his neck, Jimmy couldn't reach it himself. But his mother was only too glad to keep the boy going, for he was such a cheery little fellow. Sometimes, but well worth winding up, for that.

It was the funniest performance, his winding up. I was there on a Saturday night, so I happened to see it. He'll wind him up with a silver key, and the blood ran through his veins with a deuce of a record, and the best of them.

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"Run down, indeed," said Mr. Dixon, hotly. "Jimmy won't run down when he knows it is a walking match. He'll win fair, you may depend upon it."

The race was to be run on a Saturday night, so it happened that the night before Mrs. Whortleberry was taken ill with an attack of grip, and in the morning she was too sick to rise.

She told the maid to rather feather-brained creature and forgot all about it, and as for Jimmy, he was so full of the race that he never noticed that he had not been wound up. Of course, just as the boys were starting, he could run several hours overtime, so he was able to go down to breakfast and then run in and kiss his mother good-bye and tell her that he was sorry that she was too sick to come and see the start.

Just as he was leaving the room she called out to him.

"Are you wound up, Jimmy?" she called.

"Yes, yes, yes," he answered, and rode along, cheering the boys and urging them to do their best.

"This is going to be dead-eyes," said Jimmy. "It lies between me and you and I bet I'll win." He and Elgin were neck and neck.

"You'll have to wind him up with an electric to get him going," said Jimmy. "Anyhow a boy that's wound up ought to go faster than a plain every day boy. I don't think it was fair to let you in."

Again Jimmy heard a sound like a bell, but he knew that when he stopped he'd stop all at once and without any warning.

"Don't talk, walk," said he shortly, and pegged away, his little legs swinging back and forth with the regularity of piston rods.

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Across the tracks they went and around the station and back across the tracks, old Mr. Dixon cheering lustily and growing almost apoplectic with his exertions.

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They were within a quarter of a mile of the home stretch when Jimmy began to slacken his pace. This encouraged Medford who had been gradually working his way up in the procession and he passed Somerville who had a long distance Elgin and steadily advanced until he was within a rod of Jimmy.

Jimmy had been a remarkably close runner, and no one had dropped out. You should have seen Mr. Dixon's face when he saw his favorite losing ground. As for Elgin, he was so encouraged that he broke into a run and of course he lost his chance of winning.

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Jimmy felt unusually buoyant. He bounded around until Mr. Dixon said: "Boy, if you'll save some of that energy for the race I haven't a doubt but you'll win the medal."

Elgin Waltham knew that Jimmy had to be wound up, and he said, "Did they wind you tight, Jimmy?"

Jimmy's face went white as it struck him that he had not been wound up at all, but, boylike, he thought he'd probably get through all right, so he said nothing. But he stopped jumping and said, "Let's hurry up and get to the library."

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